

THE GRAPEVINE

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Dear Friends,

Boo! Guess what month it is already! Summer flew out the window right on schedule with a windy rainstorm on the first day of fall last month, and to be truthful, we loved it. It's time to cook a little heartier, dress a little more warmly, watch more football, put the garden to bed, savor the vast varieties of flavors in apples and pears, and appreciate the color orange a little more. We've got you covered on those last two.

Are pumpkins squash? Are squash pumpkins? Both belong to the family "cucurbita." The C. pepo branch of the family includes most of what we think of as pumpkins, some fall squash, and all the thin skinned summer squashes, like zucchini. The C. maxima branch of the family includes most fall squash and some pumpkins, the gargantuan ones. Botanically, squash is a fruit, but we cook and it and think of it as a savory veggie.

All pumpkins are edible, but on a practical level, some are more edible than others. You won't find much to eat inside one of the Baby Boo or Munchkin varieties, but they make cute individual serving and baking containers for soups and casseroles, and though you can make a pie out of a carving pumpkin, I have to ask, why would you, when there are so many fabulous cooking variety pumpkins? Go ahead and roast the seeds from your jack-o-lantern, but for a pie, choose a Sugar Pie, Cinderella, Long Island Cheese or Fairy Tale variety pumpkin and you won't be disappointed.

In local eating, October fruits delight us with a rainbow of apples and pears. We've bid farewell to peaches and nectarines, but it's time to embrace pomegranates, persimmons and figs, the trifecta of California fall fruit. Local beets, rutabagas and parsnips are here to lend earthy notes to your roasts, soups and salads. Reach for California artichokes this month; fall and spring are prime 'choke season.

Brussels sprouts, carrots and cabbages are local this time of year, and potatoes are all new crop, Washington grown. We made oven fries with new crop bakers last night to accompany the silver salmon caught on my husband's expedition through Deception Pass, and though the fish was stellar, rave reviews came in for the fries. "This actually tastes like a potato," was the comment from someone who usually opens up a bag of frozen fries.

For oven fries, toss baking potato wedges with cooking oil, season with salt and/or your favorite spices. Bake on a greased baking sheet at 400 degrees 10 minutes. Adjust cooking time, depending on how thick your wedges are.

Just off the tree, new crop heirloom Jonathon apples are here now! Get 'em when you see 'em, because they don't hang around for long. Jonathons have been cultivated for hundreds of years, and were a favorite cider apple of the Colonists. When you eat a modern Jonagold, you can taste its Jonathon parentage in the sweet/tart, cidery flavor. Jonathons don't store well, so freeze some pie filling or make up a batch of sauce and appreciate this increasingly hard-to-find orchard treasure all winter long.

This morning we're anticipating the first delivery of Reynolds' Orchard new crop Golden Delicious. I usually "Facebook" a photo of Bill and his trailer filled with apples, because his arrival has a lot of meaning to us. Not simply because he grows outstanding apples, but because his relationship with the fruit market goes back several decades, and that's a beautiful thing.

I'm excited to tell Bill that Ivar's is back in town after a long absence, because his habit for many years was to drop off his fruit at the market, detach the trailer and head to Ivar's for fish and chips. Slowly but surely, parts of Bothell are recovering from the extended road remodeling project, and we are too, with a few notable exceptions such as the occasional capricious lane closure and unannounced power outage.

Thank you for your patience during all the traffic mess and power outages over the four-year duration of the road project, including the blackout last month. It's a scramble to drag out the generator, string up the extension cords, bypass the computers and get up and running, but thanks to our crew, we can get 'er done. Please remember to continue to patronize the Main Street and Country Village business communities as they feel the pain of our city's makeover this fall.

We had a lovely and busy season this year, and my favorite memories involve the small moments I shared with customers. A recipe passed to me, a hug, a memory shared, a compliment, some first-aid help (!), or a bit of carefully phased constructive criticism, a little home-baked love, these quiet exchanges are at the heart of what makes being here so meaningful. Thank you. Working with youngsters has its challenges, and I thank you also for your kindness and patience with our young staff.

On Wednesday, October 2, I'll be the "entertainment" at the Kenmore Heritage Society's meeting at 7 p.m. at the Kenmore Community Club. The public is welcome—I'm going to hold forth on how to choose a ripe melon, and "75 years of fruitful history," giving an account of the fruit market since its inception in 1938. I guess I better throw in a little info on Prohibition, because the KHS flyer says that I'll also be talking about local roadhouses of that era, and as you may know, the market is built on the site of the infamous Blue Swallow Inn.

All you BHS alumni are invited back "home" to Pop Keeney Field on October 4 for the annual Homecoming game. Kickoff is at 7, but get there early so you can have your photo up with the Alumni Cougar, and get temporarily tattooed at the Alumni Association's booth in the pavilion.

We're working on getting some new videos up on our YFM YouTube channel. One of our alumni employees is a videographer, and he dropped by to film Bridget and Esther giving you the lowdown on pineapples and tropical fruit. We're in development with our "Fall Squash" video, but because our plan is so ambitious ("Squash Party"), it may not come out until after we're closed.

Remember, we're open all October, and we'll sneak into the first few days of November. We're gonna take a little break, maybe have that cucurbita pepo/cucurbita maxima party, then see you again on November 29th in our Christmas tree mode. Please have a great winter! Stay healthy and happy and come back to us on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 6 a.m., and we'll eat our way through the local, seasonal year together again, for the 76th time. It's a beautiful thing!

Fruitfully Yours,

KARIN POAGE

GRAPEVINE BACKPAGE

OATMEAL FIG COOKIES

---Recipe from California Figs. Makes 24 cookies.

- 1 cup softened butter
 - 1 1/2 cups dark brown sugar
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 2 eggs
 - 2 teaspoons vanilla
 - 2 tablespoons milk
 - 2 1/2 cups all purpose flour
 - 1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon baking soda
 - 2 cups rolled oats (quick or regular)
- Oven 350, grease cookie sheets.

In the large bowl of a mixer, cream butter with sugar and salt. In a small bowl, whisk eggs together with vanilla and milk. With mixer on low speed, slowly add egg mixture to butter mixture and beat well.

In another bowl, sift flour together with baking powder and baking soda. Stir in oats. With mixer on low speed, add dry ingredients to wet ingredients 1 cup at a time, scraping sides of bowl and mixing until just combined. Stir in chopped figs and mix until evenly distributed.

Drop dough in 2 tablespoon portions two inches apart on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 15-17 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool and store in an airtight container.

ROASTED KABOCHA SQUASH

---This Japanese variety has a lighter, fluffier texture, more akin to baked potato than other fall squash. Since you're not peeling it for this recipe, do rinse and scrub the squash under cold running water before cooking. Preheat oven to 400.

- 1 medium Kabocha squash
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- salt and pepper

Cut the stem off the washed squash and cut squash in half. Scoop and discard seeds. Cut each half into 6-8 wedges. In a large bowl, toss squash with oil.

Line a large baking tray with foil and space squash evenly. Use a yin-yang pattern if necessary to fit squash on tray. Bake for 15 minutes, carefully flip with a spatula and return to oven for final 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serves 4.

CARMELIZED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

---Most "caramelized" Brussels sprouts recipes call for sugar, but it's really not necessary, just as it's not necessary to add sugar when making caramelized onions. 1 pint container will serve 3-4 people.

- 1 pint container Brussels sprouts
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- salt and pepper

Optional: a dash of lemon juice or Balsamic vinegar and a dusting of finely shredded Parmesan cheese

Rinse and trim sprouts, cut in half. Toss with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Place sprouts cut side down and cook about 5 minutes. When sprouts are just barely tender, turn heat to medium high and cook, tossing until sprouts are caramelized, just a minute or so longer.

Season with salt and pepper, and if desired, lemon juice or Balsamic vinegar and Parmesan cheese.

WILTED KALE WITH BACON

---Makes 4 servings.

- 2 bunches kale, chopped
- 4 strips bacon, diced
- 1 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup broth or water
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- salt and pepper

In a large sauce pan, cook bacon until crisp. Remove bacon bits, leaving fat. Add olive oil to fat and heat over medium burner. Add garlic and stir, cooking until garlic is soft, not brown. Over high heat add broth and kale. Cover and cook about 5 minutes.

In a small bowl, stir together vinegar and sugar, stirring to dissolve sugar. Remove lid from kale and continue to cook, stirring occasionally until liquid is absorbed. Season with salt and pepper and toss with sugar-vinegar mixture. Top with bacon bits.

APPLE CIDER JELLY

---This is an easy, "freezer" jelly. If using fresh pressed cider, jelly will have the darker color of the cider. Recipe from the Ball Blue Book.

- 1 3/4 cup unsweetened apple juice
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 three-ounce pouch liquid pectin
- 3 1/2 cups sugar

Combine apple juice with sugar in a large bowl, stirring well. Let stand 10 minutes. Add entire contents of pectin pouch and lemon juice to juice/sugar mixture. Stir well and let stand 3 minutes.

Fill four 8 oz. freezer safe containers with the jelly mixture and let jelly stand in fridge 24 hours until jelly has set, then freeze. Refrigerated, the jelly will keep about 3 weeks. Frozen, the jelly keeps about a year.

ANSWER: Rattlesnakes politely warn potential victims with a rattle before striking, so it earned this nickname. "Jaw puke" snake and "why?" gentleman snake are nicknames for rattlesnakes. What native animal is nicknamed the "rattle before striking" so it earned this nickname. WASHINGTON TRIVIA: AIVA